

# LABOUR

MARCH 1948

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\* \* \*

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# The Labour Organiser

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## Tough Tasks

WHAT a plateful! That must be the reaction of many agents, organisers, and key workers to the complicated tasks arising from Redistribution.

In all but 76 constituencies, some degree of change is involved. In many of the constituencies which are affected, some pretty big "surgical" operations will be carried out. This will undoubtedly affect the political complexion of a number of divisions but it would be unwise to dogmatise on this aspect at this stage.

*Mr. Windle, the National Agent, clearly sets out the immediate tasks for the Parties affected in his article in this month's "Organiser." In particular, parties should heed his warning against precipitate action.*

Parliament has still to pronounce on the Redistribution proposals and until it does so it would be folly to act as though these recommendations were final. Meantime, it will be well if party officers and executives throughout the country do get a clear understanding of the proposed new boundaries and of the effect these will have on their organisational set-up. Questions of the transfer of finance and liabilities, the ownership of premises, the transfer of leases and tenures, and the distribution of Party equipment can also usefully be considered now in a preliminary fashion.

Once Parliament finally decides, it will be clear that no time must be lost. Between then and the General Election, an immense amount of work lies ahead of the "redistributed" parties. Guidance on these matters will be given at all the various stages by Head Office, and close attention to this advice will enable us to face the General Election with an organisation in fighting shape and "rarin' to go."

## Speakers

Every D.L.P. should have a battery of competent local speakers at its command. Yet few parties do enough to train their members who show promise in this direction.

The story of Farnworth's Speakers' Class, as told in this issue, will, we hope, encourage other parties to go ahead and form similar groups.

The talent is there. Let us see that we use it to the full.

# ELECTIONS BILL:

## What it means to us

THE Bill on the Redistribution of Parliamentary seats and the Reformation of the Parliamentary franchise and the law relating to elections has been long awaited. Agents and Divisional Party Secretaries will welcome its proposals, as the provisions of the Bill, if passed by Parliament, will remove a great number of anomalies and make the task of an agent easier.

The Bill is split up into five parts and incorporates the recommendations of the Boundary Commission on the Redistribution of Parliamentary seats. These recommendations have been dealt with in a previous issue, and I

do not intend to deal with them here except to draw attention to the fact that by the abolition of the dual franchise, University seats will now go out of existence and all the remaining constituencies will be territorial, each returning one Member.

The registration of electors will be on a simpler basis. As far as the Parliamentary Franchise is concerned, there will only be a Residence qualification, the Business Premises qualification is now abolished. For the purposes of the Act a member of H.M. Forces will be treated as residing at an address at which he declares he would, but for his service, have been residing.

### TWO REGISTERS AND HOUSEHOLD CANVASS

THE Bill provides for the publication of two registers a year, and for the resumption of the system of household canvass which was in operation from 1918 to 1939. This, it is believed, is a far more satisfactory method of ensuring a complete register than the present method of relying on information from the national register.

As far as Local Government Franchise is concerned there is provision for a non-resident vote in any Local Government Area, and this will largely take the form of the present Ratepayers' register in that any person occupying land or business premises shall be entitled to registration. He will, however, at an ordinary election be unable to exercise this vote if he is registered by a residential qualification within the same electoral area.

There is also provision for postal voting in Local Government Elections, for persons qualified to vote by post in a Parliamentary Election, and a further extension of this facility to persons who have removed from the address at which they were registered providing that their new address is not within the same Borough.

Clause VII of the Bill will substantially re-enact the existing law as to the division of constituencies into Polling Districts, but it provides for a more adequate number of Polling Stations. This will be of great value to the Rural Areas especially, as every Parish will have a polling place.

The nomination of Candidates in elections is substantially altered. The Bill provides that the same form as is now required for the nomination of Municipal Candidates shall be used in all elections. This is a great improvement since there are now different forms for Parliamentary, Municipal and Urban District, Rural District and Scottish Elections. The law relating to the description of the Candidate on his nomination paper is greatly clarified. It will not be possible, for instance, for a Candidate to describe himself as the Secretary of a particular Tenants' Association, or any other Association. If there is sufficient information to identify the Candidate, the description need not refer to his rank, profession or calling.

## By JOHN PINKERTON

The new Representation of the People Bill proposes radical changes in our existing Election Law and Procedure. Here is a summary of the Bill's main provisions, together with an assessment of what the changes imply in electoral machinery. Agents, organisers, and other key workers will no doubt wish to keep this article beside them for reference.



### CHANGES IN NOMINATION PROCEDURE

CANDIDATES in Parliamentary Elections will now be required to give consent to nomination, and the same will continue to apply to Local Government Candidates. The consent in all instances, except in Parliamentary Elections, must now contain a statement by the Candidate that he is qualified to be elected, and to be a Member.

This new requirement now places upon the person seeking election the onus of proving that he is qualified. This is a great improvement on the present conditions which puts the onus on a person doubting a qualification to prove his doubt. The days and hours for the delivery of nomination papers are extended in Parliamentary Elections and the day of nomination is altered in County Council and Municipal Elections.

The Bill proposes that the Returning Officer at a Parliamentary Election shall issue official poll cards to all electors and prevents a political Party or Candidate from issuing during the election a poll card or any other documents sufficiently like a poll card as to deceive the electorate.

Provision is made for the extension of hours of polling in District and Parish Elections until 9 o'clock in the evening, provided application is made by a number of Candidates, not being less than the number of Councillors to be elected. This brings District and

Parish Elections into line with County Council and Municipal. The statutory hours for Polling in Parliamentary Elections will be 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

It is also proposed that Elections by show of hands for Parish Councillors shall be abolished, and the method of election shall be by ballot as in all other elections. The Bill seeks to determine elections where there is an equality of votes by lot, and not by the casting vote of the Returning Officer. This will apply to all Local Government as well as Parliamentary Elections.

There is provision for the return of the Candidate's deposit as soon as practicable after the result of the election is declared. The present law makes it impossible for a successful candidate to have his deposit returned until after he has taken his seat in the House. It is now impossible for a successful candidate to take his seat in the House of Commons without heavy penalties, if he did not appoint either himself or another person as his Election Agent at the time of his nomination.

The new Bill provides that if a Candidate has not appointed an Election Agent at the time of his nomination it shall be regarded that he has appointed himself as his own Agent, and he can therefore conduct his election in like manner to a Candidate who has appointed an Agent.

### NEW STATUS FOR AGENTS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

THE same provision regarding the appointment of an Election Agent will now apply to Municipal Elections. This is a completely new venture and gives a status to Agents in Municipal Elections which they have not had hitherto. This again is a great improvement.

The right of Candidates in all elections to the use of schools and halls for election meetings has now been extended to include the County Schools and Voluntary Schools situated in the Constituency, or an adjoining constituency. Any arrangement for the use of a room in school premises is to be

made with the Local Education Authority maintaining the school, and it will be indigent upon every Local Education Authority to prepare for their area lists of rooms in school premises which Candidates in any constituency are entitled to use. The charge for the use of the room shall not exceed the amount of lighting, heating and cleaning and the provision for the Caretaker and attendant. It will still not be possible to use any of the schoolrooms for Committee Rooms.

The maximum of expenditure to be spent in Parliamentary Elections is to

be completely revised. In a Borough Constituency a basic figure of £450 plus one penny for each elector is to be the limit. In a County Constituency £450 plus one penny halfpenny for each elector. This means that a Borough Constituency of fifty thousand electorate would have a maximum expenditure allowed of £658 and in a County Constituency of like electorate, £762.

A Candidate's personal expenses up to £100 is not to be included in the maximum expenses, but any fee paid to the agent will.

## RETURN OF EXPENSES IN ALL LOCAL ELECTIONS

THE maximum expenses and a return of such expenses and a declaration will now have to be made in all Local Government Elections. Hitherto these have only been required in County Council and Municipal Borough Elections; Metropolitan Boroughs, Urban, Rural District and Parish Elections have not been subject to this rule.

There is no change proposed for the maximum amount of expenses in these elections. There are a number of miscellaneous amendments as to election expenses included in the new Bill. One is that the prohibition against payment of account of the hire of bands, the use of torches, flags, banners, cockades, ribbons and other marks of distinction is now abolished, and if an agent wishes to employ, or to make use of such, he can do so, but the cost must be included in the return of expenses.

It is also proposed to make legal the expenses and remuneration paid to speakers at public meetings. The amount of that expenditure, however,

together with the name of the speaker, the place and time of each meeting, will have to be made on a separate list in the return of expenses. Another important legal requirement proposed is that of election literature printed, or duplicated, or made by any process for multiplying copies of the documents other than by copying it by hand, shall be deemed to be printed matter and must bear the name and address of the printer and publisher. This clause will remove any doubt from the minds of election agents as to what should bear an imprint and what should not.

It will be seen from the above review that the law relating to Local Elections has now been largely assimilated into the law which appertains to Parliamentary Elections, and the same rules will apply to Municipal Elections as applied to Parliamentary in the use of premises for Committee Rooms. In Parliamentary Elections permanent political clubs are permitted for the use of Candidates as Committee Rooms. This was not permitted in Municipal Elections under the old law.

## ALL LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE SPRING

TWO more items of extreme importance are that County Council Elections and all Municipal Elections are to be held in the Spring; the County Council on a day in the week beginning with the first Sunday before the 9th April; Municipal Borough, Metropolitan, Urban, Rural District, and Parish Councils on a day in the week beginning with the Sunday before the 9th May.

The actual day of election for County Councils will be fixed by the County Council at its meeting held in the month of January. For Municipal Borough Elections the day will be determined each year by the Secretary of State, and the day of election for Metropolitan Borough, District and Parish Councils shall be fixed by the County Council at the end of the previous February after consultation in

the case of the Election of District Councillors with the District Council concerned.

Lastly, the law relating to Election Petitions will, if the Bill is carried, be substantially altered, and it will be easier to proceed with a Petition than hitherto. Clause 47 will make corrupt practices punishable on summary conviction as well as on indictment.

For the granting of relief for venial offences such as errors and omissions relating to election expenses and return, restraining false statements about candidates, and the inspection of ballot papers for the purpose of legal proceedings, the County Court will have powers hitherto exercised by the High Court. This will be a less costly proceeding than at present.

There is also provision for the

reducing of the periods of incapacity for Corrupt and Illegal Practices.

In summarising I must say that the far-reaching character of this Bill and its wide scope has followed very closely the lines recommended by the Inter-departmental Committee which has been sitting for some three years, and its various Clauses will put into effect proposals which have been deemed necessary by agents of all political parties throughout the country.

I have not been able to deal with every new proposal contained in the Bill. I have, however, given a review of the most important. There are, of course, certain Clauses which need to be made more watertight and certain provisions which call for clarification, but in spite of this it must be admitted that on the whole the Bill is an extremely good one and long overdue.

## Voting Machines: the Case Against

By A. L. WILLIAMS, Assistant National Agent

IT is hardly conceivable that the Committee on Electoral Reform did not consider the possibility of voting by machine. There was nothing, however, in their reports recommending the introduction of machine voting in British elections, nor is there any such provision in the Representation of the People Bill now before Parliament. Jack Cutter's colleagues are then in good company in opposing the idea. (See *Labour Organiser*, February.)

Even in the United States voting by machine is not universal. It appears to be in general use in large cities where there are numerous candidates for various offices. Its advantage over the manual system of voting in places where there are relatively few electors and a small number of candidates is doubtful.

The main justification for introducing the machine is that it saves labour. In this country, where the electorate is broken up into small groups, for each of which a Polling Station is provided, the saving of nerve and muscle by the introduction of a machine would not justify the cost of its installation.

The British Electoral System has been built up as a result of the struggles of political reformers for more than a hundred years. At the end of it all we have achieved a system

which enables the elector to cast his vote free from intimidation and corruption, and for the result to be recorded without there being the slightest doubt about its accuracy.

### Would It Save Labour?

The personal application for a ballot paper; the marking of that paper by the Presiding Officer; the putting of a cross on the paper by the elector in the booth provided; the folding and insertion of the paper in a sealed ballot-box, and all the other "old fashioned" procedure which we follow in this country has been devised with no other purpose in view than to ensure perfectly free and fair electioneering. This procedure, plus the rights of the candidate and his agents to supervise it at every stage, have made our electoral system the envy of the world.

*Human beings may err, but machines are not faultless. What is more important, machines are subject to human control, and in America it is alleged that voting machines frequently are tampered with.*

Even if machines were universally introduced, to ensure that the election was carried on fairly, in the long run it would be found, very probably, that as many persons would be required to supervise the recording and counting of votes as are needed by our present methods.

# Redistribution: the Problems Ahead

By R. T. WINDLE, National Agent

*"The immediate task is to get a clear understanding of what re-organisation will involve and avoid precipitant action."*

While the Representation of the People's Bill deals with very important changes in the franchise and in the law relating to the Conduct of Parliamentary and Local Government Elections, the section relating to the Redistribution of Parliamentary seats is the one of major immediate interest to the Constituency and Local Labour Parties throughout the country.

The effects of this Bill, when passed, will involve varying degrees of change in our organisation in all but 76 constituencies. The degree of change varies from 63, where the increase or decrease of the electoral is under 2,000 electors, to 321 where the increase or decrease is between 20,000 and 40,000 electors.

In many cases constituencies are telescoped, and as many as three constituencies go to make up one new constituency. In other cases, sections of the constituency are either removed or added, or both, so that the political complexion of the constituency may be greatly changed. Also, some new constituencies are created.

## Compile Information Now

During the period of the passing of the Bill and the General Election, it will be necessary to re-organise each Constituency Labour Party on the basis of the new boundaries, to settle all problems relating to the allocation of finances and liabilities, the ownership of premises, the transfer of leases and tenures and agreements respecting the distribution of Party equipment.

The House of Commons will first have to determine its attitude towards the Bill before it will be wise to take any decisive steps in connection with the re-organisation of the Constituency Labour Parties, but in the meantime, it would be as well for the officers and executive committees of Constituency and Local Labour Parties to get a clear understanding of the proposed new boundaries and of the transfer both of Local Labour Parties and affiliated organisations which will have to be effected.

*The compilation of information of this sort can be started now, but in no*

*case should any step be taken to convene a conference for the purpose of re-organising the Parties on the basis of the new Constituency boundaries.*

The District Organiser within each of our organising regions will consult with the Constituency Labour Parties on the steps to be taken, and will give the necessary guidance. The degree of change that takes place varies greatly in the different constituencies, and the change over must be undertaken in an ordered manner. Therefore, the first thing in each case is for the Constituency Party to consult with the District Organiser.

## Selection of Candidates

The Redistribution is taking place when we have in the House of Commons a greater number of Labour Members of Parliament than ever before. A number of the Labour Members will find themselves without constituencies, and for this reason it is desirable that the selection of candidates should not (except in special cases) proceed until it is known what Members of Parliament are going to be available for selection in other constituencies.

*I am sure everyone will agree that the present Members of Parliament who may be without constituencies as a result of the Redistribution of Seats are entitled to consideration on at least equal terms with other available candidates.*

Many Constituency Parties have entered into contract for the employment of constituency agents, and in a number of cases the responsibility for their continued employment may have to be transferred to a newly-organised Party. In connection with this, the interests of the Members of Parliament concerned and of financing organisations which contribute to the expenses of paying the agent will have to be taken into consideration.

## Individual Membership

With regard to Individual Membership, Constituency Labour Parties should proceed to issue cards to their members on the basis of their present organisation. An adjustment will have to be made when the Constituency

Parties are re-organised on the basis of the new boundaries, and the transfer of membership will then be effected. As this cannot be completed until later in the year, members should be supplied with Membership cards through the existing Constituency Labour Parties.

These are some of the problems

which arise from Redistribution. The important thing is for Constituency and Local Labour Parties to avoid any precipitate action. Ample guidance and information will be conveyed to all Constituency and Local Labour Parties through the columns of the "Labour Organiser" and by circular from Head Office.

## The New Appointments

Mr. Donald Alger, who has been appointed Propaganda Officer at Head Office in succession to Reg. Underhill, has for the past two years been full-time agent for South-East Essex. Originally a member of the British Association of Chemists, where he worked for the affiliation of this body with the Trades Union Congress, Mr. Alger has been an enthusiastic officer of the Party for nearly 20 years. He was secretary of the South Derbyshire Divisional Labour Party for 14 years and has also been chairman of the Derbyshire Federation of Labour Parties and a member of the executive of the East Midlands Regional Council. In South Derbyshire, Mr. Alger organised and ran many local government election campaigns. Aged 45, Mr. Alger has been a member of U.S.D.A.W. for the past 16 years.

Mr. J. Drummond has been appointed agent for West Fife and Dunfermline Burghs. Aged 47, Mr. Drummond is chairman of his local Party and a representative on the Fife Federation of D.L.P.s. A trade union member since 1914, he was chairman of the main office committee of the Civil Service Clerical Association, resigning this post on his election to Provost. In 1938 he gained the one seat for Labour on Lochgelly Burgh Council, which today has 10 Labour members.

Mr. R. S. Harrison, who becomes agent for Sudbury, is chairman of his local Party and a member of his Divisional Executive Committee. Aged 33 and a fruit farm manager by profession, Mr. Harrison was a candidate for West Suffolk County Council in March, 1946, and supervised rural district and parish council elections in the following April. He has been a trade union member for 12 years and is a member of his branch committee.

Mr. S. R. Nelson, who has been assistant agent at Nelson for the past 18

months, becomes agent for Nelson and Colne. Aged 38, Mr. Nelson has been a Party member for 22 years and an officer for eight years. As assistant agent he had control of Colne Borough during last year's municipal elections and at various by-elections. He has been a member of his trade union for 22 years.

Mr. C. V. Woods, who has been agent at West Hartlepool since 1946, has been appointed agent for Leicester. Aged 50, he has been a Party and trade union member for 26 years. Mr. Woods has been a Party agent for ten years and served at West Leeds during the General Election of 1945.

## NEW CROSS EMPIRE

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### FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

- Week beginning:  
Mar. 1.—Big Bill Campbell and Full Variety.  
.. 8.—Billy Cotton and Band with Variety.  
.. 15.—"Spivs and Drones," with Ernie Lotinga and Company.  
.. 22.—Sid Millward and the Nitwits.  
.. 29.—Stewart MacPherson (in person) "Twenty Questions."  
April 5.—Lucan & McShane in Old Mother Riley.  
.. 12.—Cavan O'Connor and Full Variety.  
.. 26.—Max Miller and Full Variety.  
May 3.—Issy Bonn and the Big Broadcast.

This is your Theatre, so book early for the above shows. If you are not aware of our special terms to Labour Parties, etc., write to Bill Haywood, Liaison Officer, New Cross Empire, S.E.14. Let us help to plan your social activities. It is our job to help you enjoy your leisure hours.

# Our Speakers' Class

By J. SEDDON, Publicity Officer, Farnworth D.L.P.

Nothing is more harassing for a Divisional Party organisation at the time of a General Election than to find itself lacking in members experienced in the difficult arts of public speaking and chairmanship. It is vital at election times for a Divisional Party to be able to call upon members who can control meetings efficiently and expound Labour policy with clarity and force. If election meetings are badly addressed and conducted, public confidence in the Party will diminish and many votes may be lost. Yet this aspect of organisation frequently does not receive the attention it deserves.

As soon as Councillor Sydney Stout took up the duties of Secretary-Agent to the Farnworth Divisional Labour Party in July, 1946, he set about forming a Speakers' Class, for the special purpose of promoting confidence in public speaking among those members—particularly the younger ones—who would probably remain inarticulate supporters of the Labour movement for the rest of their lives unless given an opportunity to gain experience in a comparatively informal and friendly atmosphere.

## How It Grew

The first meeting took place in the early part of the winter of 1946. There were eight people present on that occasion—everything must have a beginning! As happens with all new ideas, it took some little time to work up general interest in the scheme, but each weekly meeting saw one or two fresh faces, and when the first session came to a close in April the following year, the class could boast 30 members, and was already established as an important part of the Divisional set-up.

Thus the class began its present session in September last year with every reasonable prospect of success, and since then membership has increased to over 60, with a possibility of the 100 mark being reached in the near future if the enrolment rate is maintained.

Most of the members are under 30 years of age, the youngest being Jean

Hardy, aged 17, who is assistant secretary of the Farnworth Local Labour Party and secretary of the League of Youth. But the class is by no means exclusive to the younger section of the party; indeed, some Labour Aldermen and Councillors, for all their experience, admit to having learned a great deal by regular attendance. A syllabus of selected speakers and subjects is laid down, and at each meeting five minutes is allocated to the chairman's opening remarks, 20 minutes to the speaker, 15 minutes to questions and discussion, 10 minutes to criticisms of the speaker, and 10 minutes to criticisms of the chairman.

The subjects cover important aspects of National and Local Government and Current Affairs, and on "open dates" new students can volunteer to address the class. On such occasions, polemics are the order of the day, and a typical instance this session was Frank Lowery's paper on foreign policy. On another occasion Mrs. Reid, a cotton weaver, began her first public speech by saying that she doubted whether she could last out for the requisite 20 minutes. She went on for 55!

## Widespread Interest

The class is the only one of its kind in the area, and interest in its activities has been aroused outside Party circles. Recently, for example, a local debating society asked for a student to address them on the case for Socialism. Jack Featherstone was chosen, and not only did he contrive to speak with evangelical fervour for 40 minutes, but he also achieved the notable feat of answering questions for well over an hour.

Farnworth's M.P., George Tomlinson, is enthusiastic about the scheme and has addressed the class on two occasions, and among other visitors has been Michael Foot, M.P. for Devonport and Editor of the Labour weekly "Tribune." The Divisional Party, assisted by local Trade Unions and Labour Clubs, are at present raising funds to send two students to the Party's summer school in Bangor, North Wales, and it is hoped to do this every year from now on.

# A Call in Time

By JOHN T. ANSON, Organiser, East and West Riding

Full employment has brought a shortage of voluntary workers with sufficient leisure time to do the canvassing and door-step work of increasing membership.

The Sowerby and Elland divisional parties have substantially overcome the difficulty by reviving an old, old method of canvassing. Their results have been surprising.

*In a period of six weeks a steady increase in membership has occurred; literature sales have been multiplied several times; old members, i.e., members who dropped out of the Party before the present officers were attached to the division, have been brought back into the fold and, finally, a good canvass return of electors has been obtained for the first time in many instances.*

## Tools for the Job

The tools for the job are simple. A supply of old foolscap envelopes in good condition; gummed slips overprinted as per attached copy (if envelopes are not readily available the gummed slips can be dispensed with and paper wrappers suitably overprinted obtained); a supply of current Party literature, pamphlets, leaflets and membership forms; a copy of the Register of Electors conveniently pasted on to canvass cards or stiff board, and a half-dozen workers in a Ward with an hour of leisure to give to the Party each week.

*The method is to pack the envelope with a pamphlet, a leaflet, a membership form and a personal duplicated letter from the Labour Member of Parliament or Prospective Candidate to the electors.*

Select the street of houses to be canvassed—care should be taken to keep the number of houses per week per team to a maximum of twenty-four—then proceed to insert an envelope into the letter-box of each house. There is no need to knock or wait.

Three or four days later a call is made upon each house with a courteous intimation that you are from the Labour Party and have called in connection with the envelope left a few days ago.

## More Pamphlets Sold

Indications are quickly forthcoming from the householder of the interest or antagonism stimulated. The result is either a new member made, an old one re-contacted, an opponent discovered and a record of electors upon which future activity can be based.

Sales of literature are increased and even where no sale is made the Party's message has reached a large number of homes over a period of regular activity. Another benefit is that it gives the Party an opportunity of discovering issues, local as well as national, which are troubling the citizens.

Thus "planks" for the local election campaign are obtained and an opportunity given to the Labour Member of Parliament or Prospective Candidate to devote special attention to local matters in a more learned way.

Care should be taken to select literature suitable to the locality and in the making and preserving of the records obtained.

---

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE  
ELLAND DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY

**T**he enclosed pamphlet is a statement of the Labour Party's Programme, and whatever your political views may be, we would like you to read it.

*A Representative of the Party will call on you within the next few days, and you may then either return the pamphlets, or retain them on payment of Twopence.*

**thank you**

# The Real Problem for Women Party Workers

By Mrs. PEGGY CRANE, South Kensington D.L.P.

It is strange to find in the "Labour Organiser" (January issue) of all places, in the year 1948, a cry of "Give women their chance." There is little doubt that the chance is there all right, and has been for some years now. The trouble is that few women will or can take it.

When they do take it, as examples given later will show, there is little "man-minded" hindrance to their reaching responsible and distinguished positions. The problem that is of real concern to the Labour Party just now is how to make it practically possible for more women — particularly more housewives and mothers — to consider taking up public life at all.

Recently I asked one woman, already active in public life, if she would be willing to stand as a candidate at the next general election. Her reply was that she would not, as it would mean that if she got into Parliament she would never have a chance of seeing her children at all. That typifies the problem that the majority of women are up against.

*It is not so much a matter of male prejudice, which in the Labour Party at least is practically non-existent today, as a matter of domestic responsibilities. The women of 30 or 40 years ago managed to overcome the first hurdle; the women of this generation have still, in general, to overcome the second.*

## How Parties Can Help

Courses in political education are obviously not enough. The average woman in the Labour Party, if she is worth anything, obtains her political education with her male colleagues at ordinary Party functions or by studying the political press. When she doesn't do this it is usually because she hasn't time.

Homes and children these days just don't allow much time to think about political and national problems, let alone to play an active part in solving

them. What the average woman needs is more leisure — and this is where women's organisations in the Party can help their women members. In my own Party a women's sub-committee (not a section) is endeavouring to let every housewife have an afternoon off (a) by running a toddlers' crèche one afternoon a week, and (b) by encouraging mothers who live near each other to undertake to look after each others' children on a regular specific afternoon.

We have also inaugurated a panel of "sitters-in" for our members. Starting like this in a small way we hope to be able to give our women members a little more freedom and time, not only for Party work, but to develop their own interests.

This, of course, does not solve the problem of enabling women to fill public offices, but it is along such practical, rather than theoretical, lines that women must help themselves if they are to make the most of the opportunities that do await them now in almost every sphere of public life. The few public services that exist to help the housewife are quite inadequate for present needs.

## Women ARE Given Chance

If I have devoted most of this article to housewives, it is partly because I am one myself and partly because they constitute the largest "gainfully employed" group in the nation, whose offices could with benefit be used more often. Where women have not been hindered by domestic problems or have courageously been able to overcome them, a few examples are enough to contradict Mary Morris's implications that women are not given a fair chance in the Labour movement.

On the L.C.C., for instance, both the Chairman of the Council and the chief Labour whip are women, as are the chairmen of four different committees. Three of the Labour-controlled metropolitan boroughs have women mayors.



## MORTONS FOR STATIONERY

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# The Customers Are Mostly Left

By COLIN MACPHEE

MORGAN PHILLIPS started something when he decided that a Bookshop-cum-Information Office should be opened at Transport House. Wiseacres shook their heads and for a variety of reasons swore that the scheme was a dud 'un.

Yet now, 2½ years after it was opened, the Bookshop and Inquiries Office is one of the minor success stories at Head Office. An average of over fifty people visit the Office every day and a sizeable and growing amount of literature is sold over its counter each year.

### The Questions They Ask

MUCH of the success of the Bookshop is undoubtedly due to the knowledgeability and personality of Miss May Davey, who has been in charge of it since it was opened. May Davey gets asked some queer questions in the course of a year but few ever stump her. Maybe that's due to her Research Department training and her long association with the Labour Movement, but she also has to use a lot of native wit as well.

There was, for instance, that dashing young Captain in the Royal Marines, who called in one day. He merely wanted to be an M.P. "Was it better," he asked, "to join all the four parties at once?" May Davey sent him home with a load of Labour Party pamphlets to swot up on the Facts of Life.

But in the main the customers are mostly Left to May Davey.

Lots of keen Party workers from in and around London and the provinces pop in to see her during the course of a year. Literature Secretaries find her H.Q. a big attraction.

Hundreds of them have paid tribute to her organisation of the Bookshop and to the bright and effective manner in which the literature is displayed. She even gets Christmas cards from as far off as India and Scandinavia from

folk who made her acquaintance at Transport House.

Her biggest best-seller so far is, of course, "Let Us Face The Future," but others which have sold well are the Guides to National Insurance and Health, Rise of the Labour Party, and ABC of the Crisis.

### First of the Many?

MAY DAVEY goes to no end of trouble to meet requests for particular pamphlets or books. If you want the best White Papers, she has them, as well as the latest Fabian, W.E.A. and similar publications. She also has a good stock of Penguins and Pelicans.

Miss Davey joined the Party staff in 1922 after having worked with H. M. Hyndman in the Social Democratic Federation. She has served in most of our Departments but has enjoyed the last 2½ years most of all. "I'm a born bookseller," she told me, "but how I wish I'd found it out a lot sooner."

It may be that the little Bookshop in Transport House will be the forerunner of a number of Labour Party Bookshops throughout the country. Hints of developments in this direction are being noised abroad. Anyway, whatever happens, our Head Office Bookshop has made a good start on a job that is eminently well worth doing.

## DEADLINE

*Don't forget the deadline for the receipt of all contributions — the 15th of the month for publication the following month.*

*That applies to advertisements as well as articles. Send them all to The Editor, Labour Organiser, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1.*

*Let's hear what your Party is doing!*

# Our Big May Day Drive

By JOHN N. POWRIE, Secretary, Dartford D.L.P.

In common with most active Constituency Parties, the Dartford Divisional Labour Party has always had an outstanding function to celebrate May Day. This year we are to tackle probably the most ambitious function the Party has ever tackled outside a General Election.

In conjunction with the Dartford Industrial Co-operative Society, the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, and many non-political organisations, a week of celebration is being arranged to pay tribute to the great work of the miners.

Our Member, Mr. Norman Dodds, M.P., has already made arrangements with the Mansfield Co-operative Society to arrange for the selection of a miner and his lady, and for the Dover Co-operative Society to do the same. The selected colleagues will be the guests of the Constituency for a week, and the following functions are being arranged in their honour.

The Constituency has three Local Government areas, and each of these is now in the process of holding meetings to arrange the events for their respective districts. The whole show is controlled by a committee of representatives from the Divisional Labour Party, Local Labour Parties, Trade Union Branches and representatives from the Dartford Industrial Co-operative Society, the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, Women's Sections, League of Youth and various other organisations. The Local Councils are also co-operating in the scheme.

## Visits to Factories

A new feature of this venture is that various Joint Production Committees are arranging, in conjunction with managements, for the miners and their wives to visit factories in the district, also a large power station which is part of the grid scheme, thus giving the miners an opportunity of seeing their products turned into power and helping to build the plants and machinery that will play a large part in the future of coal mining.

At the time of writing this article the programme has not been completed, but an outline of the proposals may give some idea of the size of the under-

taking, and also serve as a guide to any constituency party who, in the future, may contemplate something along these lines.

The first step will be at Mansfield and Dover, where, in conjunction with the Local Parties Miners' Federation Branch, the Co-operative Societies will arrange for the choice of the miners on a democratic basis. At this function representatives of the Dartford "Salute the Miner" Committee will be present.

On Friday, April 30th, the miners and friends will arrive in London and be the guests of the London Co-operative Society, who will entertain and look after their comfort until mid-day on Saturday, May 1st.

## Welcome by the Mayor

At about 3 p.m. the visitors will arrive at Dartford, where they will be welcomed by the Mayor of Dartford and members of the Committee. They will then go on to the opening of a Mining Exhibition on a site provided by the Dartford Co-operative Society. This site is being cleared by voluntary labour provided by Trade Unions and other bodies in the district, including a number of local councillors. The Building Workers' Trade Unions and the Women's Organisations are arranging for the provision of refreshments. The whole of the exhibition is being provided by the Coal Board and will be open to the public all the following week. School children are invited to take part in an essay competition, for which prizes are provided.

During the afternoon and evening there will be a visit to the May Day celebrations at the adjoining constituency of Chislehurst and Sidcup and prizes at the Erith May Day Fair will be presented by the guests.

On Sunday, May 2nd, an Industrial Service will be held in the Erith Parish Church, when praise will be led by the Tilmanston Miners' Choir. A reception by the Mayor of Erith will follow.

Other events will be held each day until Wednesday. We hope that the week's activities will help to build an active membership, both for the Labour Party and the Co-operative Societies.

# Make Your Meetings Pay

By Miss GLADYS HUGHES, Hon. Sec., Southend-on-Sea L.P.

*Southend is still a Tory stronghold. But regular Labour meetings in the local Theatre on a pay-for-admission basis are proving a big success. Here is how they are arranged.*

A year before the General Election the Southend Labour Party formed a Campaign Committee, including delegates from the three wings of the movement—the Labour Party, Trade Unions, and the Co-operative Party.

Having found this brought the three organisations into closer contact, with the committee working smoothly, it was decided to continue on the same lines after the election for the purpose of publishing a news letter, edited by our Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, and to hold public meetings.

We were fortunate in so far that our local theatre was presented to the town by the owner, and we can hire it every three months for holding meetings.

Our method of consolidating the foundation for these meetings, was firstly to distribute a News Letter, which had a printed slip attached requesting the people to reply if they wished to:—(1) Receive a copy of the News Letter regularly. (2) Join the Labour Party. (3) Receive tickets for public meetings. (4) Attend lectures and discussion groups.

The letter was sent to every member of the Borough Council, irrespective of party, including the Tory Mayor, also to doctors, clergymen, and other bodies in the town.

*A list was compiled of the replies received, after which we sent out invitations, together with tickets for every meeting held. By this postal method we have made many friends and members, several now holding key positions in the local party.*

800 at 6d.

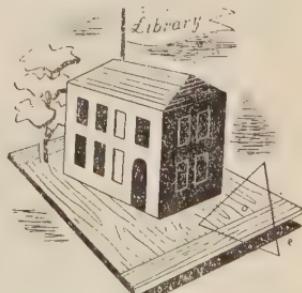
Our tickets of admission are price 6d. for all public meetings. The audiences average from 500 to 800. The collections range from £13 to £34 10s. This money is allocated to the News Letter which is distributed free.

*The cost of the meetings is about £25, but every one of them has been a financial success, and their propaganda value is wealth untold.*

We greatly appreciate the wide range of speakers we have been able to obtain through the Propaganda Officer, and our own efforts. They have included

## Public Libraries PUBLICITY

The emphasis is not casual. If you are active in municipal affairs, especially if you serve on the Libraries' Committee, you know how often the Library is the focal point for local information. From the Libraries Dept. issues much information as well as books. Where the service embraces discussion and music groups, exhibitions, civic weeks organisation, it may be useful to you to know that CAS—the publicity organisation-with-the-social-purpose—specialises in the production of all kinds of publicity material for such events. May we help with YOUR next municipal venture?



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Tom Dribberg, M.P., Harold Laski, Dr. Haden-Guest, M.P., Lord Strabolgi, M.P., Dr. Edith Summerskill, M.P., Ald. C. W. Key, M.P., Sir Hartley Shawcross, M.P., Mr. A. G. Bottomley, M.P., Mr. A. Blenkinsop, M.P., Rt. Hon. A. V. Alexander, M.P., and others.

As this seaside town is one of the last Tory strongholds, we feel that this is no mean achievement. We are confident that in the division of the Parliamentary Division we shall return our first Labour M.P. for Southend-on-Sea.

## Week-End Schools for Agents

By L. H. M. HILLIARD, General Secretary, Agents' Union

I wrote some time ago of London District's intention to organise a week-end school for district members on problems of agency work. The success of the first school has encouraged the district to go ahead with others and by all accounts members are finding the opportunity to "talk things over" and share experiences, valuable!

Vic Butler, London's Secretary, tells me that a record crowd are expected at the third school, at which Harold Croft will be dealing with legal problems and Len Sims with publicity. Lancashire and Yorkshire step into the picture, too, for Reg Belben and Euan Carr are arranging a joint school for district members at Hayes Farm on April 13th-14th. This is to be a mid-week school with "Euan" dealing with "Union business" and "Party organisation," and "Reg" with the new "Representation of the People" Bill now before Parliament.

Although the war years interfered with its normal work the Union has always taken the lead in improving the practical knowledge of its members in organising work and the laws governing elections and the registration of electors.

*It's good to find that this work is being resumed and that members are as keen as ever to equip themselves to serve the movement in the most effective manner.*

### Two Sessions Again

Last year saw an innovation in the procedure at the Union's Annual Conference, for two sessions were introduced. The success of this measure has decided the E.C. to adopt a similar practice this year and so our conference will commence at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, May 15th, and will continue at 10 a.m. on Sunday, 16th. The E.C. will have an interesting report to pre-

sent, for despite the change of secretaryship, continuity was maintained and much work has been done. During the year all the districts have become "live" in quite a remarkable manner and a sense of union "solidarity" has been noted. I think we shall have a good conference and hope that it will be well attended—even better than last year which was, almost, a record. Notices will be going out to members shortly inviting resolutions and nominations for office which will have to be back in the General Secretary's hands by March 27th. Amendments to resolutions will be valid up till April 7th.

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We cannot let the opportunity to get a large number of our members together, socially, pass without organising some kind of function. It is proposed to arrange a "Union Re-union" with some informal dancing, some first-class entertainment, and, we hope, a running buffet so that all our members, young and old, will find something during the evening which will appeal to them. Full details of this venture will be circulated in good time so that members may make arrangements to join us.

This, of course, will not interfere with social activities of an informal nature arranged by the districts on much the same line as London District did last year!

#### New Salary Scales

Members are reminded that in the "News-Letter," issued recently by the General Secretary, a request was made for information in connection with members' salaries at January 1st, etc. It is also necessary to draw the attention of members to the fact that notice must be given by members tendering or receiving notice to vacate positions. This information is very necessary for the reasons stated, and is required immediately. The co-operation of all members is sought to ensure that it is obtained speedily. Members having difficulty in coming on at the new rates are advised to write to the General Secretary without delay!

## Ten Thousand Issues

On March 22nd, Labour's own newspaper, "The Daily Herald," celebrates its 10,000th issue. To-day a great national newspaper with a circulation

of well over 2,000,000, it is interesting to look back on those early days when, with a capital of less than £300, a modest little newspaper passionately devoted to the cause of Labour, was launched with the enthusiastic backing of George Lansbury, Ben Tillett and a group of Labour leaders.

First published on January 25th, 1911, to set forth the claims of the printers who were on strike, that first "Daily Herald" was one sheet folded into four small pages costing a half-penny and published on four days a week.

In 1929 came a big turning point in its career. This was its association with Odhams Press Ltd., as the "Daily Herald" (1929), Ltd. The articles of association between Odhams (owning 51 per cent. of the shares) and the Trades Union Congress (owning 49 per cent.), specified that the political policy of the paper would reflect the policy laid down by the Annual Conference of the Labour Party and the industrial policy would be that of the General Council of the T.U.C. And so it is to-day.

With all the resources and organisation of a great publishing house behind it, the paper grew from strength to strength and its circulation rose rapidly. To-day, the "Daily Herald" is able to compete in production and organisation with the other influential organs of present-day journalism.

### SCHOOLS FOR SOCIALISTS

Spend an enjoyable and profitable holiday at the Labour Party's national Summer Schools this year.

There are splendid facilities for learning all about the Party's programme and activities in congenial surroundings and in an atmosphere of good comradeship.

Last year's Summer Schools were an outstanding success. Applications for this year's Schools are already pouring in. Book now and make sure of your place.

The Schools will be held at four centres—St. John's College, University of Durham, from 3-17 July; at University College of North Wales, Bangor, from 10 July to 7 August; at "The Rookery," Ruskin College, Oxford, from 31 July to 14 August; and at Beatrice Webb House, Leith Hill, Surrey, from 14 August to 11 September. Inclusive charge is £5 per week for each student.

Those attending the Schools must be individual or affiliated members of the Labour Party, and must not be members of any organisation proscribed by Annual Conference.

Write now for application forms to the  
**SECRETARY, LABOUR PARTY.**  
Transport House, Smith Square, London,  
S.W.1.

## More Views on "Subs."

Coun. Harper answers his own question; our "subs" are too high—IF they are collected all at once. Most Labour Party members of ordinary means would hesitate at the idea of paying 6/- all at one go, especially where both man and wife are in the fold. But then, "subs" were surely never intended to be collected annually, because by so doing the *important personal contact* between active and passive comrades is lost. I am a firm believer in this intimate personal relationship between active Socialists on the one hand, and their less interested fellow-member on the other. I consider that door-step work, whether it be collecting "subs," selling literature, or merely calling upon members to have a chat about the Party's activities, is the surest way of vitalising those of feebler convictions, and so making *active* Socialists. I suggest that the above are the "door-step

realities" that Coun. Harper might consider.

RAY. HESKETH,  
Malden and Coombe L.P., Surrey.

### Man and Wife—10/-?

The Women's Section of the Loughborough Labour Party at a recent meeting had a discussion on the article "Are Our 'Subs' Too High?" Our members did not agree to such low "subs" as Councillor Harper suggested, but they did agree on a joint subscription for man and wife of 10/- per year.

They found as they went collecting it was always the woman who drops out when they cannot afford the two subscriptions, and as a women's section we want all the women members we can get.

M. G. MAGOR, Coun.  
(Hon. Sec.)

(Continued from page 19)

five days beforehand. Ascertain from the R.O. how many agents are allowed. The agents must make a declaration of secrecy. The R.O. will supply declaration forms.

**Recount.**—A candidate or agent may request a recount before the result is declared, but there is no statutory provision for this and consent is at the discretion of the R.O.

**Equality of Votes.**—The R.O. may give a casting vote by word of mouth or in writing. If he does not do so, the double return makes the election void and a new election will follow.

**Imprint** must appear on all bills, placards and posters.

**Flags, Banners and other Marks of Distinction** are prohibited.

**Candidate's right to free use of Schoolroom.** In effect Sec. 69 of L.G.A. 1933 gives candidates the same claim to the use of public elementary schools as for parliamentary elections. No payment can be claimed for use of the rooms, but charges can be made for incidental expense such as light, heat, cleaning, etc.

**Unlicensed Cars for Polling Day.**—Such cars can be used on polling day, but solely for taking electors to and from the poll. The candidate should formally notify the police of any unlicensed vehicles used, so that no hold-ups occur. Also give the driver a signed note. It is wise to quote the following section:—

Municipal Elections (C. & I. P.) Act, 1884, Sec. 10 (4):

"No person shall be liable to pay any duty or to take out a licence for any carriage by reason only of such carriage being used without payment or promise of payment for the conveyance of electors to and from the poll at an election."

**Petrol Allowances and Coupons; Paper Quotas.**—Circulars giving information on these matters have been sent by Head Office to Party Secretaries.

## Watch these Legal Points

By HAROLD CROFT

All candidates and agents should obtain the booklet "Conduct of Local Elections" for practical help and reference in the management of the contest.

**No Purchase Tax.**—Parties should take an early opportunity of ascertaining that their printers are aware of non-liability to Purchase Tax in the cases of ordinary election addresses and poll cards.

**Day of Election:** This year ordinarily Monday, April 5th.—The day of election shall be the first Monday in April, or if that is Easter Monday, the last Monday in March, or in either case such other day not being earlier than the preceding Saturday or later than the following Wednesday, as may for special reasons be fixed by the County Council.

**Nomination.**—Last day for delivery of nomination papers to the R.O., five o'clock in the afternoon on the 12th day before the day of election (i.e., if the day of election is April 5th, the last day for delivery of nomination papers is five o'clock on Friday, March 19th. Sundays, Bank Holiday and Good Friday are excluded in computing the time of above).

Every candidate must be nominated by two electors for the electoral area or if the area is divided into wards, for the ward, as his proposer and seconder, and must be signed by them. In the case of Urban District forms—eight assenters are required.

No person shall sign more than one nomination paper in respect of the same candidate, nor for more than one ward or district, nor shall he sign more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled in the electoral area or ward as the case may be. Urban District forms require P.D. letter and Register No. of electors. Any omission or fault in these can invalidate the form.

**Candidate's Consent.**—A person shall not be validly nominated unless his consent, given in writing, on or within one month before the last day for nomination, and attested by one witness is delivered at the place and within the time appointed for the delivery of nomination papers. A Form of Consent can be obtained from the Clerk.

**Telegraphed Consent.**—A candidate, who is outside the United Kingdom as a member of the Forces, a seaman or a war worker abroad, can give his consent to nomination by telegram. His consent need not be attested, but the telegram must be sent on or within one month of the last day of nominations and be delivered to the R.O. by or before the last day for nominations.

**Filling up the Nomination Paper.**—Addresses of proposer and seconder are required. Any default can invalidate a paper. One Christian name should be signed in full, as one initial is held not to disclose identity. J. Smith may be (John) (James) (Jasper) (Jonathan) Smith. Place of abode is residence, not a business address. See that the candidate's abode gives the name of town or village.

**NOTE.**—Deliver more than one nomination paper to the R.O. At previous elections an only nomination paper, proving faulty, has caused our candidates to lose nomination.

**Validity of Nomination Papers.**—After the expiration of the time for delivery of nomination papers, the R.O. shall examine them. Ordinarily the R.O. has no jurisdiction over the qualifications of a candidate. He decides on the validity of the nomination paper as a legal form. His decision that a paper is valid cannot be questioned, but if he decides that a paper is invalid, the decision can be subject to review on an election petition. He notifies the candidate of his decision and publishes the notice of nomination on the following day.

**Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents.**—Notices must be received by the R.O. at least two clear days before day of election. Send the notices four or

(Continued on previous page)

# Labour Party Publications

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### NEW DISCUSSION SERIES:

TOWARDS TOMORROW  
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY,

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*carriage paid*.

} 1 copy 3d. 12 for  
1s. 6d.; 100 10s.

### LEAGUE OF YOUTH:

LABOUR'S LEAGUE OF YOUTH *Post free*: 1 copy, 3d.; 12. 1s. 6d.; 100. 10s. 0d.

## BOOKS

GUIDE TO WAR PENSIONS, *post free*: 1 copy 7d.

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GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL INSURANCE (INDUSTRIAL INJURIES) ACT  
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PARTY ORGANISATION *Post free*: 1 copy, 1s. 3d.

CONDUCT OF LOCAL ELECTIONS (England and Wales) *Post free*: 1 copy, 1s. 3d.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT HANDBOOK, 1946-1947 *Post free*: 1 copy, 1s. 6d.

SUPPLEMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT HANDBOOK, 1947-8, *post free*: 1 copy 6d.

EVERYDAY SONGS FOR LABOUR FESTIVALS *Post free*: 1 copy, 1s. 3d.

## BADGES

LEAGUE OF YOUTH BADGES—stud and brooch *Post free*: 2s. each, £1 1s. per dozen

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Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1